

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 077660

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. BREZHNEV'S HEALTH AND HIS VISIT TO FRANCE

A SOVIET EMBASSY SOURCE CONFIRMED TO EMBASSY PARIS THAT FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER DE GUIRINGAUD HAS BEEN INVITED TO MOSCOW JUNE 6 TO PREPARE FOR BREZHNEV'S VISIT. THE ACTUAL DATE FOR THE VISIT WILL NOT BE SET UNTIL DE GUIRINGAUD'S RETURN, BUT IT IS GENERALLY EXPECTED THAT BREZHNEV WILL COME TO FRANCE IN JUNE OR JULY. ASKED WHY THE SOVIETS WERE DELAYING THE ANNOUNCEMENT, THE SOURCE SAID THE REASON WAS BREZHNEV'S HEALTH. INDEED, IT WAS EVEN "SLIGHTLY POSSIBLE" BREZHNEV MIGHT NOT MAKE IT AT ALL.

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EMBASSY COMMENT: THIS IS THE FIRST TIME BREZHNEV'S HEALTH HAS BEEN CITED TO US BY A SOVIET OFFICIAL, EVEN ON A DISCREET BACKGROUND BASIS, AS A REASON FOR THE DELAY IN SETTING AN EXACT DATE. IT IMPLIES HE MAY BE ABLE TO SCHEDULE MAJOR EFFORTS ONLY UPON QUITE SHORT NOTICE. (CONFIDENTIAL)
PARIS 10043 (LIMDIS/NOFORN), 4/6.)

2. TWO VIEWS ON SALT

A. THE CHINESE VIEW

PRC CHARGE WANG CHIN-CHING TOLD EMBASSY MOSCOW ON APRIL 4 HE WAS NOT SURPRISED THE SOVIETS HAD REJECTED THE TWO AMERICAN SALT PROPOSALS. ACCORDING TO WANG:

--THE SOVIETS READILY AGREED TO VLADIVOSTOK SINCE THEY COULD CONTINUE TO BUILD ARMS. THE "DEEP CUTS" PROPOSAL WAS REJECTED BECAUSE THE SOVIETS "WILL NEVER AGREE TO REDUCE ARMAMENTS."

--THE SOVIETS REJECTED THE "FALLBACK PACKAGE" TO GAIN TIME TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN CRUISE MISSILE.

--THE REJECTION OF BOTH SALT PACKAGES SHOWS THE HYPOCRISY OF MOSCOW'S ALLEGED INTEREST IN DISARMAMENT.

EMBASSY COMMENT: WANG'S REMARKS ARE HARDLY SURPRISING FROM A PRC OFFICIAL. WANG MADE NO CRITICAL REFERENCES TO THE US, BUT WAS CLEARLY PLEASED THE SECRETARY'S VISIT HAD NOT PRODUCED A BREAKTHROUGH.

B. THE YUGOSLAV VIEW

YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR SMOLE CALLED ON AMBASSADOR TOON ON APRIL 5 TO DISCUSS THE SECRETARY'S MOSCOW TRIP. SMOLE, WHO CONFIDENTIAL

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IS WELL INFORMED ON THE LOCAL SCENE, SAID THE SOVIETS:

--FOUND OUR SALT PROPOSAL FOR DEEP CUTS "OUTRAGEOUS;" AND

--WERE GENUINELY SHOCKED BY PRESIDENT CARTER'S MARCH 30 PRESS CONFERENCE WHICH FORCED THEM TO STAGE A GROMYKO PRESS CONFERENCE IN REBUTTAL.

SMOLE ADDED THAT IN HIS VIEW GROMYKO HAD MADE TWO ERRORS. FIRST, HIS ARGUMENTATION WAS TOO LEGALISTIC TO GET MUCH SYMPATHY FROM A WORLD EAGER FOR SUPERPOWER DISARMAMENT. SECOND, HIS INSISTENCE THAT THE SOVIETS HAD ALWAYS TAKEN THE LEAD ON DISARMAMENT SOUNDED PATRONIZING. IN FUTURE TALKS, SMOLE WARNED, WE MAY SEE PREEMPTIVE SOVIET PROPAGANDA SPECTACULARS DESIGNED TO WARD OFF THE EFFECTS OF ANOTHER PRESIDENTIAL PRESS CONFERENCE. (CONFIDENTIAL) MOSCOW 4624 AND 4625, 4/6.)

3. FRG POSITION ON MBFR

EMBASSY BONN REPORTS THAT SPD LEADER WEHNER, CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT AND FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER HAVE RECENTLY ISSUED STATEMENTS ON MBFR.

--WEHNER, MARCH 29, SUGGESTED THAT TROOP REDUCTIONS BE "SIMULTANEOUS, SYMMETRICAL AND UNIVERSAL" AND THAT SERIOUS CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE EAST'S "FREEZE" PROPOSAL.

--SCHMIDT, MARCH 30, AFFIRMED THE FRG POSITION ON EVENTUAL PARITY WHILE REFUSING TO RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A FREEZE AS LONG AS AGREEMENT ON FURTHER MBFR STEPS COULD BE ACHIEVED.

--GENSCHER, APRIL 6, STATED THAT: (A) MBFR CAN ONLY
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BE SUCCESSFULLY NEGOTIATED ON THE BASIS OF AN ALLIANCE POSITION; (B) PARITY REMAINS A KEY ELEMENT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS; (C) THE COLLECTIVITY PRINCIPLE MUST BE PROTECTED; AND (D) A FREEZE OF EXISTING TROOP STRENGTHS OR EVEN THEIR SYMBOLIC REDUCTION ARE UNACCEPTABLE IN THE ABSENCE OF THE ABOVE CONDITIONS.

EMBASSY COMMENT: WE INTERPRET WEHNER'S COMMENTS AS A CRY OF FRUSTRATION THAT NOTHING MUCH SEEMS TO BE HAPPENING IN THE NEGOTIATIONS AND AS A SIGNAL TO THE SOVIETS THAT THE GERMANS WISH DETENTE TO CONTINUE. GENSCHER'S CONFIDANTS TOLD US THAT HIS INTERVIEW WAS DESIGNED TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT THAT THE FRG POSITION WAS THE ALLIANCE POSITION, AND THAT LEADING SPD FIGURES DID NOT SPEAK FOR THE GOVERNMENT. (CONFIDENTIAL) BONN 6097, 4/6.)
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